

THEY walk, through hedgerows, woods, glades with flowers.

MATILDA

What do you think it is? This thing with my eyes?

MISS HONEY

I... can't pretend that I know, Matilda. But I don't believe we should be frightened of it. I think it's something to do with that incredible mind of yours.

MATILDA

You mean, there's no room in my head for all my brains, so they have to squish out through my eyes?

Beat.

MISS HONEY

Well, not exactly but, yes something like that. You certainly are a special girl Matilda. I met your mother. She's... unusual. What about your father? Is he proud to have a daughter as clever as you?

MATILDA

Oh yeah. Very. He is very proud. He's very, very, very proud. He's always saying 'Matilda, I am very proud to have a daughter as...'

Beat.

That's not true, Miss Honey. That's not what he says. He's not proud at all. He calls me a liar and a cheat and a nasty little creep.

MISS HONEY

I see.

THEY have arrived at the cottage. They enter.

Here we are; home, sweet home.

MATILDA

Are you poor?

MISS HONEY

Yes. Yes, I am. Very.

MATILDA

Don't they pay teachers very much?

MISS HONEY

Well, they don't, actually. But I am even poorer than most, because of...

other reasons. You see I used to live with my aunt. But one day I was out walking and I came across this old shed - I fell completely in love with it. I ran to the farmer and begged him to let me move in. He thought I was mad! But he agreed and I've lived here ever since.

MATILDA

MATILDA

But Miss Honey, you can't live in a shed!

MISS HONEY

I'm not strong like you, Matilda. You see, my father died when I was young. Magnus was his name. He was very kind. But when he was gone, my aunt became my legal guardian. She was mean and cruel like you can hardly imagine. And then, when I got my job as a teacher, she presented me with a bill for looking after me all those years. She'd written everything down: every tea bag, every electricity bill, every tin of beans. And she made me sign a contract to pay her back every penny. She even produced a document that said my father had given her his entire house.

MATILDA

But did he really do that? Magnus, I mean. Did he really just give her his house?

MISS HONEY

I don't know. But I find it hard to believe. Just like I cannot believe that he would have... killed himself, which is what she said happened.

Sudden gasp from MATILDA, realisation.

MATILDA

You think, you think she... did him in, don't you, Miss Honey?

MISS HONEY

I... cannot say, Matilda. All I know is that years of being bullied by that woman made me... well, pathetic; I was trapped.

MATILDA

And that's why you live here.